

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON CONSOLIDATION OF DEPARTMENTS,  
COMMITTEES AND NUMBER OF SUPERVISORY DISTRICTS  
FOR ONEIDA COUNTY  
August 30, 2010**

**Members Present:** Chairman David Hintz, John Young, Carol Pederson, Denny Thompson, and Thomas Rudolph.

**Members Excused:** None.

**Others Present:** John Potters, County Coordinator; Kevin Boneske, *The Daily News*; Peter Wolk, District #18 Supervisor; and LuAnn Brunette, Buildings & Grounds Leadperson/Committee Secretary.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Acting Chairman Hintz called the meeting to order at approximately 1:04 p.m. in Committee Room #2 of the Oneida County Courthouse. He noted that the meeting notice had been properly posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law and accommodations would be made for qualified individuals pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**APPROVE AGENDA**

Motion to approve the agenda as presented by Rudolph/Thompson. All aye on voice vote.

Chair Hintz provided committee members an opportunity to speak on the items for today's agenda.

The resolution creating this committee was reviewed.

Supervisor Young stated he felt the items identified on the agenda covered what is to be done at this committee level.

Supervisor Thompson related the charge of the committee to identify if and where consolidation could occur. He stated that budgets grow; he described government as a "perpetual motion machine", noting this is of concern to taxpayers of the county on fixed incomes. He discussed the seriousness of this charge.

Supervisor Rudolph stated that in general what has been outlined is good. He stated that "the wheel" doesn't have to be reinvented; other counties have gone through this and the committee should be looking to other counties of similar size to determine what might work for Oneida County. He stated that in terms of the budget, the group should not fool themselves that what is come up with here will

greatly impact the budgets, as this committee's recommendation will likely not impact the budget a great deal. He stated while cuts can be made in the number of supervisors for the county board and committees' operations, this will have a miniscule impact on the budget. He stated he wouldn't want to mislead the public that this will greatly impact the county's budget. Rudolph stated that he would like to see what has been outlined as a basis for further discussion.

Young stated he agreed in part with what Rudolph stated. He stated that just cutting supervisors won't be effective, instead the county needs to cut staff as well as supervisory positions.

Supervisor Pederson stated that she has researched the number of supervisors and the number of population they represent and questioned the number of twenty-one supervisors typical of the smaller northern counties. She stressed the need to capitalize on the expertise of the department heads. Pederson discussed the monthly meeting schedule of the various committees, and stated that she felt that some of the items arising at meetings such as travel vouchers should be performed by the department heads, as they have first-hand knowledge of what is going on in their departments. She questioned if committees need to meet monthly.

Chairman Hintz thanked members for their input and indicated that he shared most of the thoughts of the other committee members. He stated that he feels taxes are too high, government is too large and this committee has been charged with consolidation at three levels. Hintz continued, consolidation doesn't do anything without a reduction of personnel. He stated that reductions in personnel are difficult but the only thing that saves money. He stated that having this done by January will be a very difficult effort. Hintz pointed out that if you look at how a well-run business does this, they would look at how consolidation would impact savings of monies, and consider the positives and negatives of their proposals. He stated that the committee will need to be able to explain its recommendations and demonstrate with facts and analysis. He stated that the committee has been charged with a very difficult task.

Supervisor Thompson agreed, people are the most expensive part of this situation. He questioned what is factored in for increase in personnel costs each year.

Potters responded that annual three percent wage increases with the current staffing level would cost the county approximately \$400,000 per year. He stated that health insurance costs fluctuate depending on premium costs, noting those increases are difficult to estimate. He stated that a rough estimate is about \$600,000 per year between the two items.

Thompson noted that five or six people would have to be eliminated each year, and that is a difficult thing to look at.

Potters responded that by making those types of cuts, you would eventually end up at a point offering no services.

Chairman Hintz discussed expanding the scope of what can be done more efficiently, noting the need to draw boundaries on what the committee is to achieve.

Rudolph noted that the time frame outlined by the resolution is very tight to accomplish the charge. He stated that he wondered if by the fiscal impact statement listing twelve meetings there is an expectation that this committee will be meeting three to four times per month.

Potters clarified that the fiscal impact statement allowed for up to twelve meetings, but the committee wouldn't necessarily have to hold twelve meetings.

Rudolph related his doubt that the committee can do a complete job in that short of a time frame.

Hintz agreed, and discussed the approach to tackle the items be discussed.

### **ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON**

Motion by Young/Thompson to appoint Hintz as chair. Nominations were called for three times; there were no other nominations. Motion by Rudolph/Pederson to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Hintz. All aye on voice vote.

Motion by Thompson/Pederson to nominate Young for vice chair. Other nominations were called for three times; no other nominations were made. Motion by Pederson/Thompson to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Young as vice chair. All aye on voice vote.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments at this time.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF COMMITTEE**

#### **Departments, committees, supervisors**

Chair Hintz stated that consolidation of departments, committees, and supervisors are a goal, and asked for any other goals or objectives that should be discussed. He questioned if the committee wants to do all three simultaneously, or do one and then move on to another.

Young noted that redistricting might require a joint meeting with the redistricting committee. He stated that the last time the county was redistricted the county went from twenty supervisors to twenty-one supervisors. He stated that the reasoning was because this would eliminate an even number for a vote.

Pederson questioned how the number of supervisors to serve on a committee is determined.

Potters responded that most committees were set up years ago. He stated county code shows a list of committees and how the makeup of each committee is to be structured.

Chairman Hintz stated that it would seem that part of the charge of this committee would be to recommend changes that would impact the code. Hintz discussed a booklet that supervisors received and analysis he performed on some of the data, and he went on to compare the number of supervisors for other northern counties and the population. Oneida County has highest population, and each supervisor serves 1,751 citizens. He stated Lincoln County is second with each supervisor representing 1,347 citizens.

Thompson discussed the population increase since the last census.

Potters related that in 2002 the Taxpayer Alliance performed research on county board size, noting that the average was at 2,600 per supervisor. He discussed the findings, further noting the theory when a supervisor has less constituents, the county board member is held more accountable.

Supervisor Thompson noted his feeling that that taxpayers of rural areas pay more of the cost of government than do people living in the city, because their property is valued higher, be it farming, lake property, etc. He continued, those people tend to be more vocal to their supervisors because they are more directly impacted by what the cost of government is.

Supervisor Pederson related that all county boards do not pay the same per diem, noting some have salaried members. She stated that is another issue that reflects on what is to be done by this committee.

Chairman Hintz questioned the average cost per supervisor per year.

Potters responded, relating the highest cost would be about \$13,000-14,000 per year (including per diem and mileage), and at the lowest end would be about \$3,000-4,000, creating an average of about \$7,000 per year.

#### **DATA NEEDED TO PERFORM STUDY**

##### **Department Matrix, committee matrix county supervisors matrix**

Hintz distributed data he indicated that he had requested Potters to compile.

Chairman Hintz asked Potters to compile information on the number of committees, frequency of meetings and average length of meeting. He suggested Potters contact committee chairs for that information.

Hintz discussed assignments of individual committee members.

Potters stated that in compiling information for the committee he noted updates that need to be included on web site, and indicated this to the IT department. He discussed the impact of cost of some committees and commissions such as the Human Service Center Board.

Chairman Hintz stated that another type of matrix on which he did some research – counties that have received accolades for being well run. He stated this information could be added to the data base, noting the committee could also learn from counties that aren't well run.

Supervisor Rudolph related that he would be more in favor in looking at counties with similar population, northern counties, who would have similar problems and issues. He stated he would not want to be a judge of what counties are doing well, further noting that location, proximity, and population should be considered. He stated that when we look at the average number of people represented per supervisor by population, Oneida County supervisors are not going to cover the same as metropolitan areas/cities. He stressed the need to look areas that are comparable.

## **PROCESSES AND METHODS TO PERFORM STUDY**

### **Questionnaire, interviews, pacesetter study, other ideas**

Hintz stated that the pacesetter study would look at other counties and determine what they are doing well, and apply that to Oneida County operations. He stated that some judgments would have to be made to identify a county that could be used as an example.

Chairman Hintz discussed the idea of splitting the three areas up among committee members, for them to research and come back to the committee with findings.

Supervisor Thomspson agreed that splitting the issues would make it more workable for each member.

Chairman Hintz questioned do we want to do all three at the same time or take on departments, then committees, or do all simultaneously?

Supervisor Young responded there are instances where it would be natural to work on the committees as well as departments.

Chairman Hintz suggested the group may want to start with departments, then go to committees.

Young concurred. He stated that there are some committees that could be combined without much change to how things are done. He used Resolutions as an example of a committee that could be combined with Finance.

Supervisor Rudolph stated that some of the proposals require staff support, he questioned who would handle that.

Potters responded that support would be primarily his duty, noting he has contacts with other counties regularly.

Chairman Hintz suggested committee members may want to talk to other county supervisors or representatives as well. Hintz stated that he felt the department goal would be one of the most challenging to achieve, and would require the most work.

Thompson interjected that this committee should take advantage of the insight of the county coordinator along with any ideas he has formulated. Thompson stated that the coordinator sees departments inside and out, and suggested his involvement be utilized.

Potters related that he is on board with whatever the committee asks of him. He noted that the county has all ready combined land and water with UW-Extension. He noted that consolidation doesn't come without resistance. He stated there will be "turf issues". He further noted that resistance could also come from committees that oversee departments. Potters stated that he felt the ultimate merge of these two departments was a better fit than what was initially being proposed. Potters stated consolidation did save, there is one less employee, but more work has been distributed to other staff members. He stated the committees were also revised to one committee, with five supervisors and one member at large. He related this worked, but there are still "bugs" to be worked out, noting it will only be a year in April that this has gone on.

Supervisor Rudolph stated that when he proposed this merger, what he had in mind was to look at the committees to identify common goals and objectives to see what would fit together. He stated that these are the types of things that should be looked at, not because these look good on paper, but to identify what will improve effectiveness and efficiency of county government. He stated it can be done, and we are seeing the evidence of that.

Supervisor Young stated that he has information on the proposal he had previously prepared on supervisors and committees and would provide that to those who will work on that aspect. He stated another thing to be looked at would be elimination of duplications.

Potters noted that state statutes play an important role, as some positions are mandated. He provided examples of the Health Director or Social Services Director.

Hintz questioned if this has to be their sole responsibility.

Potters responded it would not.

### **ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

Chairman Hintz asked for committee members' interests in the areas to be studied. Assignments were as follows:

- Department consolidation – Thompson, Rudolph
- Committee consolidation – Pederson, Young
- Number of supervisors – Young, Rudolph

Potters stated that he and his staff would act as a resource for each of the working groups.

Chairman Hintz stated that he would act in an advisory role with each of the three groups, coordination, etc. He indicated that meeting with one of the teams would constitute a quorum, requiring compliance with the open meeting law. He stated that he would anticipate each of the teams would come back with an approach to be taken.

Potters stated that if the group put together questions for surveys or questionnaires, he could input those into the software program.

Hintz explained that interviews would be similar, but face-to-face. He anticipated some resistance from some staff.

Other ideas were discussed. Hintz discussed work/value analysis as looking for services or work that may not be very productive.

### **APPROVE FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, September 16, 2010 at 9:30 a.m.

Potters related that he asked Brunette to take minutes for the committee, noting that a substitute can be arranged for, but felt that it would be good to continue with one staff member for consistency.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Chairman Hintz stated that the next meeting notice should include updates from the three teams.

Young stated that he would talk with corporation counsel, to ascertain if an agenda would be required for each of the working groups of two supervisors.

Committee members discussed the possible need for an agenda or meeting notice, and the need to address this properly.

Thompson questioned if an idea of personnel that might be moving on through retirement, etc. could be provided.

Supervisor Young responded that an employer cannot ask that of staff.

Potters stated that he would provide a list of employees and the numbers of years of service. He stated that this could result in a guide as to when consolidations could take place in the future, not necessarily 2010 or 2011.

The committee reviewed and discussed information provided by Potters. Committee members discussed the jump in personnel with the construction of the law enforcement center for the sheriff's department to adequately staff the facility and to buildings & grounds to address maintenance and cleaning of that facility as well as creating a cleaning staff at the courthouse. Supervisor Young noted that previously the cleaning was performed by a cleaning service.

Potters discussed the increase in social services staff based on economic need and state funding. Potters stated he could provide populations, number of staff, budget, etc. for each county.

Supervisor Rudolph discussed the possibility of the county combining services with the city or towns. He stated that there is a potential for that type of consolidation, and noted the most recent changes in dispatch and ambulance service. He indicated there is duplication between different entities across the county, noting this is the time to look at those things.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned by a motion of Rudolph/Pederson. The time was 2:23 p.m. All aye on voice vote.

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David Hintz,  
Chairman

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LuAnn Brunette,  
Committee Secretary